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NSC BRIEFING

BURMA (Long)

- I. After ten years of firm rule, Burma has now unfortunately become subjected to disruptive political splintering.
  - A. Until this spring, government dominated by coalition (Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League--AFPFL) led by Socialist Party and including broadly based mixture of peasant and labor organizations.
    1. AFPFL has been led by triumvirate composed of Premier U Nu and Deputy Premier<sup>s</sup> Ba Swe and Kyaw Nyein--latter two leaders of Socialist Party.
- II. Over past two years, however, relations between U Nu and Kyaw Nyein increasingly cooled.
  - A. Policy was not issue--main cause was patronage.
    1. Also, Kyaw Nyein, continually blocked U Nu's anti-corruption efforts.
  - B. In April, polite agreement was reached for U Nu and Socialists to go separate ways--U Nu has always been a political independent.
  - C. It was decided to settle dispute by means of no confidence motion introduced against U Nu by Kyaw Nyein and Ba Swe.
- III. Between late April and early June, when parliament convened, both sides frantically sought to line up parliamentary support.
  - A. Tempers rose and there was general fear that violence might ensue, but army and police managed to keep things under control.

B. On 9 June, U Nu defeated Socialists' no confidence motion by narrow margin--127 to 119 (see chart).

1. His victory was made possible only with aid of 44 votes of Communist-dominated National United Front.

C. U Nu swears he made no commitments to NUF, but it seems inevitable he must grant some favors to retain its support.

D. Most importantly, NUF now can exploit U Nu's great popularity through its association with him.

IV. U Nu has now been deposed as president of the AFPFL and expelled from the League.

V. U Nu is expected to call for national elections, probably in late summer, in an attempt to strengthen his control of parliament.

A. His dependence on NUF is embarrassment to him, particularly in connection with his relations with US.

B. He seems confident that he can roundly defeat Kyaw Nyein-Ba Swe group at polls, and thus be in position to shed NUF.

VI. Others view possible outcome of elections differently.

A. It is entirely possible that NUF would be chief beneficiary.

1. Against strong and united AFPFL in 1956, NUF captured 34% of national vote.

2. Now, with AFPFL split and its leaders conducting mutually destructive electoral campaign, NUF would seem to be in position to do much better.

B. It is also possible that elections would be accompanied by considerable violence, particularly in rural areas.

1. Kyaw Nyein and Ba Swe have been rough in past.

2. Numerous insurgent groups still in field, including two brands of Communists, will be tempted to intimidate isolated villagers into voting for NUF.

3. Various AFPFL irregular pocket armies scattered throughout Burma may get out of hand in heat of electoral battle with so much at stake.

VII. In sum, there are definite dangers inherent in situation.

- A. Above-ground Communists are given far more room for maneuvering than when faced with seemingly monolithic AFPFL.
- B. Until realignment of political forces is completed, government business is likely to be virtually at stand-still at time when Burma faces many serious domestic problems.
- C. While security forces have thus far kept lid on, widespread violence might yet break out and when mercurial Burmese start shooting each other, anything can happen.